What the hell just happened?

So I initially got a tweet from someone asking me about my opinion on the "Zoey Quinn scandal". I had no idea what they were talking about, I hadn't heard anything about it. I have the parents here this week and stuff with the oncologist so I'm kind of disconnected aside from occasional DOTA. The person tried to outline it over tweets, which never works out well since you can't fit in enough information and I kind of dismissed it as another piece of pointless drama. After some rather inflammatory replies with a few accusations and people using maymay arrows, as was the custom at the time, I looked a bit further and found all manner of insanity, with many people spamming outlets and personalities asking for opinions. It looks like a fairly organized campaign and the missus let me know about it, she'd been getting info too and had read up.

The long and short of it is that Zoey Quinn the developer of Depression Quest is being accused of exploiting the nepotism that tends to plague this industry by getting a bunch of favorable coverage from people she has supposedly slept with. In addition to this, videos supposedly critical of these actions have been taken down from Youtube with copyright claims, including a video by a smaller channel called MundaneMatt. It's difficult to tell what is true and what is not. 4chan is all up in arms over it which means that alongside any truth there's always going to be ridiculous stories and trolling attempts. 4chan is a blunderbuss. It's a giant cannon filled with fuckin screws, nails, bodyparts, shit and waifu. When it fires, maybe 1% of it hits and the other 99% just goes everywhere and makes a mess. Added into this whole drama shitstorm is a cadre of SJW types and whoever it is that is opposed to that, MRAs? I don't even know the terminology at this point and frankly I don't fucking care. The kind of places posting information about this whole thing are also places I'd take with a pinch of salt or who already have a clearly outlined agenda. Internetaristocrat did the main video on this, a channel mostly dedicated to debunking SJW topics and complaining about how prevalent they are in todays media. A fair cause for the most part, though it's a fine line to walk at the best of times. Honestly that whole debate is something I try and stay the hell away from because the people involved in it are fucking terrifying.

What is clear however are two things.

1) Using the DMCA to take down criticism of your product is a terrible idea and is unethical if not in many cases flat-out illegal. Don't ever fucking do this. The Streisand effect is real and even if it isn't, you don't get to run around using copyright law to censor people. My understanding is that Zoe Quinn is accused of

taking down one of Mundanematts videos because it used a picture of her game "without permission". With the insane shitstorm currently in the air it's impossible to know if that's actually true or not. If it is, it's bullshit. You do not do this, it is disgusting behavior and previous incidents such as Garrys Incident and Guise of the Wolf that resulted in the public obliteration of the developers reputation should be reason enough not to.

However. It is entirely possible that she did not issue this claim and that it's someone impersonating her. It's easier than it should be to do this on Youtube because Youtubes system is terrible. That's always worth bearing in mind, even though the evidence I've seen up to this point seems to indicate that she is responsible. Again, you can't see very far in a shitstorm.

2) Games journalism as a whole has a massive nepotism problem, encouraged by the publishers and developers and actively partaken in by many outlets. There are plenty who don't, whether they be independent Youtube channels or important websites like Giantbomb, who made the decision not to review Bastion due to their connections with Greg Kasavin. Maintaining your independence or at the very least being completely honest about your relationship with the developer is paramount to maintaining the trust of your audience. So much shit goes on behind the scenes, more than you could ever possibly know about. I personally find things like industry parties thrown by devs and attended by the media, enthusiast press or otherwise to be a waste of money and time but more importantly an element that horribly muddies the waters in our line of work. It's one thing to be more willing to provide coverage because you happen to know a developer, it's quite another to not disclose that and then create a favorable review of a product, whether it be the final product or repeated pushes to the greenlight page. Transparency in all things is important. People are going to have friends in the industry, that's natural. They are also going to try and help them when they can, they just need to be straight up about it and be very careful about keeping their bias in check.

If these allegations are true I'm certainly disappointed in the outlets responsible. Depression Quest is not a good videogame, but I tweeted about it because even though it wasn't a good game it did a good job of conveying a message about depression which is a very real thing that's touched those around me. It's a horrible condition that is misunderstood and any effort to raise awareness and understanding about it is positive in my opinion. Doesn't make DQ a good game, it's basically a choose your own adventure novel and should be treated as such. Whether it should have been greenlit is something that's not really worth discussing at this point. A ton of absolute horseshit has been greenlit, the process is clearly

busted in every way, might I remind you that the 1st ever wave of Greenlit titles which contained many worthwhile games (whereas these days good luck finding a game you can even recognize in a list), also contained Yogventures, a game that didnt exist at the time and doesn't exist now either, purely on the basis that Yogscast were popular. The process has been broken from the very start and I've pretty much given up on the idea that it will ever be fixed or that Valve really cares about content curation at all right now. But the quality of the game really isn't up for discussion, nor is its place on Steam, what is up for discussion is whether or not outlets went beyond the realm of "personal favour" into obvious bias, whether they disclosed it and, the thing which really makes my bloodboil, whether efforts are being made to abuse the DMCA system to censor criticism of the developer. If that is the case, I thoroughly condemn it in every respect.

The problem is this. Even after reading a ton of info on this, I still have no idea how much of it is true, how much of the controversy is genuine concern about the state of the industry and how much is just rabble-rousing for the sake of it. Misogyny is very real in the games industry, it's pretty disgusting, but it's also a problem that is not confined to our industry and most of what is being said about it is repetitive noise. Any right-thinking individual knows that hating women is bad, we don't need libraries worth of articles to tell us that. We know that some people that play videogames are also horrible pieces of shit. Problem is some of those people are in on this discussion, it was obvious the moment I started getting Twitter replies about it. Some people make their agendas really obvious from the outside. Stuff like this is a good reason to NOPE the fuck out of most of these discussions. I don't want to be involved in them. Here are the 2 things I'm interested in talking about.

1) Game mechanics

2) Industry bullshit

This falls into the second category but it also has an unhealthy dash of

3) SJW/Tumblr/4chan/arguments/whatthefuckisevengoingon

Last time I got involved in anything like that I ended up with all manner of unpleasant shit thrown at me from both sides, which is maybe also why a lot of those with the loud voices get very quiet when things like this happen. You are

throwing yourself in front of the blunderbuss and hoping it doesn't hit you. It's often just not worth the aggro. I got enough real life cancer to fight without having to deal with the fake internet stuff. Chemo gives me less headaches than this stuff.

TL:DR - If Zoey Quinn did engage in censorship via the abuse of the DMCA on Youtube then I thoroughly condemn her actions as being both fucking stupid and unethical. If outlets did provide her favourable coverage because she had intimate relations with some of the writers, they're goddamn idiots for doing it, why the hell would you compromise the trust of your readers for that? The shitstorm is too insane right now to make a huge amount of sense of and I have no idea what is true and what isn't. Cooler heads prevail, heard of that phrase? Calm the fuck down and things might become clearer. Also please stop shouting at me, thanks.